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Israeli Group Meets U.S. Officials Over Charges in Espionage Case

By PHILIP SHENON
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WASHINGTON, July 1 — A high-level Israeli delegation has met with Justice Department officials to discuss prospects for criminal charges against an Israeli Air Force colonel who has been linked to a spy ring, sources close to both governments said today.

Two sources said the Israeli delegation, which included the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Meir Rosenne, concluded the talks Monday without reaching agreement on the legal status of the colonel, Aviem Sella.

A Reagan Administration official declined to say specifically what was discussed at the meeting but indicated that Israel had not won substantial concessions from the prosecutors.

Navy Spy Case Involved

Colonel Sella has been threatened with indictment in a case involving the purchase of top-secret American military documents by an Israeli espionage operation.

The Justice Department has identified the colonel as a chief Israeli contact for Jonathan Jay Pollard, an American naval analyst who has pleaded guilty to spying for Israel. Although Colonel Sella has not been charged, prosecutors have said that he may be indicted later, along with three other Israelis implicated in the espionage scheme.

The Israeli Embassy confirmed that several Israeli officials joined in a meeting Monday, including Ambassador Rosenne; his chief deputy, Eli Rubenstein, and Hanan Baron, deputy director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. American and Israeli lawyers representing Colonel Sella were also present, the officials said.

Yossi Gal, an Israeli Embassy spokesman, would not identify the Americans participating in the meeting; would not say if they worked for the Justice Department, and would not describe the deliberations. Other than to confirm that a delegation was here to discuss the Pollard case, "We're not going into any details," he said.

Israel has expressed concern that the case could damage American-Israeli relations, and there have been several reports that the Israeli Government would attempt to block charges against Colonel Sella, who is thought to be a fu-

ture leader of the Israeli military.

Mr. Gal said that three Israelis who participated in the meeting — Chaim Zadok, an Israeli lawyer representing Colonel Sella; Ram Caspi, another Israeli lawyer, and Mr. Baron — arrived in the United States over the weekend and have already left the country.

Reagan Administration officials have said they intend to indict Colonel Sella unless he cooperates fully with an investigation that centers on Mr. Pollard and his wife, Anne Henderson Pollard, who has pleaded guilty to lesser charges in the case.

Mr. Gal denied Israeli news reports that Moshe Arens, the former Israeli Defense Minister, would soon be sent to Washington as an Israeli Government emissary to help resolve the Pollard case.

Administration officials had said previously that Israel was expected to dispatch a high-ranking official to urge the Reagan Administration to bring the inquiry to an end without additional strains on relations between the two countries.

According to court documents, Colonel Sella served as Mr. Pollard's chief contact with the Israeli Government. Mr. Pollard, who worked as Navy counterterrorism analyst, has acknowledged that he sold American military documents to Israeli agents in exchange for tens of thousands of dollars.

There have been repeated news reports that others who have not yet been identified might also be charged in cases of Israeli espionage in the United States.

The Justice Department had no comment today on newspaper accounts indicating that a New Yorker who raised funds for Israeli causes has been implicated in the Pollard case.

Colonel Sella, now commander of Israel's Rimon Air Base, was a graduate student at New York University when he met Mr. Pollard in 1984, according to prosecutors. The Israeli, they said, encouraged Mr. Pollard to gather secret military information from a Navy facility in Suitland, Md.

In recent weeks, Colonel Sella has re-

tained two lawyers: Mr. Zadok, the former Israeli Justice Minister, and Leonard Garment, a prominent Washington lawyer who served in the Nixon Administration. Mr. Garment had no comment today on the case.

Mr. Caspi, an Israeli lawyer who also participated in Monday's meeting, has been asked by Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel to review the diplomatically sensitive case.

According to Administration officials, Mr. Pollard implicated Colonel Sella and at least three other Israelis: Rafael Eitan, an Israeli counterterrorism specialist; Yosef Yagur, the science attache at the Israeli Consulate in New York, and Irit Erb, a secretary at the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

The three Israelis were named as co-conspirators in the case but were not indicted.

A senior Israeli official who asked not to be named said late last month that Israel was ready to allow Justice Department investigators to question Colonel Sella in exchange for immunity from prosecution.